The Montana (MT) Partnership for Early Literacy ("the Partnership") was organized to transform

five existing preschool centers serving at-risk young children in MT into centers of educational

excellence which: 1) benefited the children and families that were involved ; and 2) has served as

a model for other centers across our state. The Partnership for Early Literacy included Project

Partners the five Partnership preschool centers, and the MT Early Reading First Team (MT ERF

Team) from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The Partnership's goals are outlined below

in Table 1.

Table 1. Partnership Goals	
1.	All participating children will graduate with high achievement levels in language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and classroom skills necessary to participate effectively in elementary school and to become proficient at reading.
2.	All classrooms contain the materials (instructional, play) and spatial arrangements (e.g., centers) that will support the development of children's language and early literacy skills.
3.	All teachers achieve high levels of instructional proficiency with research-based practices through timely, targeted, sustained, and intensive PD on children's acquisition and use of language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and print awareness. Teachers' instructional proficiencies are applied both to: 1) children making satisfactory progress, and 2) children for whom progress monitoring identifies the need for intervention in a Response to Intervention (RTI) process.
4.	All children and families transition successfully into K-3 programs aligned with SBRR.

The five Partnership preschool centers served some of the most fragile and at-risk

children in the Nation. Two centers were on or near an AI reservation, two centers primarily

served children who have identified disabilities, and 100% of the children at the remaining center

lived below poverty level. Very young AI children may be exposed to a language other than

English in their homes. The Partnership will also serve these students in culturally responsive

classrooms that meet their cognitive and affective needs. This designation was designed to help

create and implement customized in-state strategies to prevent and close the achievement gap for

AI in MT by building partnerships among OPI's Early Childhood Education leaders, OPI's

American Indian Education leaders, local school officials, local early childhood education providers, local and national tribal agencies, U.S. Department of Education ERF, and institutes of higher education in MT (CCSSO, 2004).

The Partnership improved language and literacy outcomes for approximately 400 children and improved the instructional practices of 39 teachers and staff per year while building sustained capacity for delivering quality instruction in four high-need communities that have been scaled to other programs throughout the state.